



*Remarks by Brigadier General Don T. Riley,  
Commander, Mississippi Valley Division,  
at the Meeting of the Association of Levee Boards of  
Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana, 5 Dec 02*

**GOOD MORNING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, AND THANK YOU FOR THE INVITATION TO ATTEND YOUR ANNUAL MEETING.**

**IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE TO MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME WITH OUR LOUISIANA PARTNERS AND CUSTOMERS.**

**I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE OF MEETING A FEW OF YOU DURING THE LOW-WATER INSPECTION TRIP, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO BROADENING AND STRENGTHENING THESE RELATIONSHIPS AS WE GATHER HERE IN NEW ORLEANS.**

**I PLAN TO KEEP MY REMARKS RATHER BRIEF TODAY, AS MOST OF YOU WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR MY FULL DISCOURSE TOMORROW.**

**IN ADDITION, OUR VICKSBURG AND NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT ENGINEERS WILL SHORTLY PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF CORPS FLOOD CONTROL WORK IN YOUR AREA.**

**SO, BEING THE NEW GUY ON THE BLOCK, WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO IS TALK TO YOU BRIEFLY ABOUT MY GOALS, BELIEFS, AND VISION.**

**THE DISTRICT ENGINEERS, AS WELL AS ALL MISSISSIPPI VALLEY DIVISION EMPLOYEES, ARE HEARING THIS SAME MESSAGE.**

**MY VISION**

**TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE WATERSHED WITH AN EFFECTIVE BALANCE OF ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND SOCIAL REQUIREMENTS.**

## **MY GOALS**

**TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION, I BELIEVE WE NEED TO FOCUS ON THREE LONG-TERM GOALS:**

- **BUILD A LEARNING ORGANIZATION -- THIS WILL TAKE TIME TO DO, BUT WILL SAVE TIME AND HEARTACHE IN THE LONG RUN. IF WE DO THIS RIGHT, NEARLY EVERYTHING WILL FALL INTO PLACE -- OUR PRIORITIES, OUR PERSONNEL PROGRAMS, OUR STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS, AND OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.**
- **BUILD EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC COALITIONS -- WE WILL ACCOMPLISH VERY LITTLE IF WE DO NOT DO THIS WELL. THIS IS NOT CHEAP IN TERMS OF TIME AND MONEY -- IT IS HARD LABOR, BUT IT IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN SUCCEED IN OUR WORK FOR THE NATION. THERE ARE TOO MANY COMPETING INTERESTS INVOLVED IN OUR WORK FOR US TO ATTEMPT TO MOVE FORWARD ALONE OR WITH ONLY A NARROW TEAM.**
- **BUILD A PROCESS TO CONSIDER LONG-TERM WATERSHED IMPACTS OF ALL OUR WORK -- WE DO NOT YET HAVE THE SCIENTIFIC CAPABILITY TO DO THIS THOROUGHLY, BUT WE WILL WORK TO BUILD IT. WE DO, HOWEVER, HAVE A VERY GOOD CORE OF PROFESSIONALS WITH SOLID ENGINEERING AND SCIENTIFIC SKILLS AS WELL AS MODELS TO WHICH WE CAN APPLY SOUND, PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT.**

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- **BASE YOUR DECISIONS ON THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING.**
- **MAINTAIN YOUR INTEGRITY AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE PROCESS; HAVE NO PRE-DETERMINED SOLUTIONS.**
- **BE CANDID WITH YOUR STAKEHOLDERS, AND DO THIS SOONER RATHER THAN LATER.**
- **DO NOT RAISE EXPECTATIONS ABOVE WHAT WE CAN DELIVER.**
- **DELIVER WHAT YOU PROMISE.**

- **PERSONALLY ENGAGE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS.**

**ONE POINT I WANT TO GET ACROSS TO YOU TODAY IS THAT WE -- AND BY WE, I MEAN THE CORPS AS WELL AS LEVEE BOARDS -- ARE NOT JUST ABOUT FLOOD CONTROL.**

**WE MUST THINK HOLISTICALLY -- BE PREPARED TO ADDRESS ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND SOCIAL FACTORS -- IN ALL WE DO.**

**I'LL BE THE FIRST TO ADMIT THAT WE ALL HAVE A TOUGH JOB TO DO -- A JOB REQUIRING MUCH HARD WORK THAT ONLY THE BEST OF LEADERS CAN SUCCEED AT.**

**AND IN ORDER TO SUCCEED, I REFER BACK TO THE VISION AND GOALS I JUST SPOKE OF. I WANT TO PLACE SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE BUILDING OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC COALITIONS. WE MUST FOCUS ON DEVELOPING AND NURTURING WHAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED "NON-TRADITIONAL" RELATIONSHIPS. AND MUCH OF THE RELATIONSHIP BUILDING IS DONE AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL.**

**AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, THE VICKSBURG AND NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT ENGINEERS WILL BE TAKING THEIR TURNS UP HERE SHORTLY. AND THEY'RE GOING TO MAKE THEIR JOBS SOUND PRETTY EASY -- BUT TAKE MY WORD FOR IT, WHAT THEY DO IS FAR FROM EASY.**

**THEY NEED -- WE NEED -- YOUR PARTNERSHIP, AS WELL AS YOUR HELP, IN BUILDING COALITIONS THAT ARE BROADER THAN OUR TRADITIONAL RELATIONSHIPS.**

**CLOSING**

**THE NEW YEAR IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING THE MANY CHALLENGES THAT LIE AHEAD IN HELPING SERVE THE PEOPLE OF THIS GREAT VALLEY. I'M CONFIDENT THAT BY WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WE WILL MEET THESE CHALLENGES.**

**THANKS AGAIN FOR INVITING ME. ENJOY YOUR STAY IN NEW ORLEANS, AND OUR BEST WISHES FOR A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!**

**NOW LET'S HEAR FROM THE DISTRICT ENGINEERS.**